As HGO faces a challenge of historic proportions—rebuilding in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey’s devastation—we know that we’re not alone.

“There has been an overwhelming response from our donors and our HGO family,” says Managing Director Perryn Leech. “We are standing here with everybody else in Houston to do the very best we can to help each other.”

Many of our patrons have contributed to the HGO Harvey Fund. We are so grateful for these gifts, which will help make the long road to recovery a bit easier.

Supporters and ticketholders have stepped up to lend volunteer hours, contributions, cars, temporary office space—even a grand piano—to keep HGO’s season on track. “As I followed HGO’s posts on Facebook, my heart sank for my HGO family, my community, my safe place,” says Birgitt van Wijk. “So I contacted Patrick Summers and asked if HGO could use my baby grand piano. The show must go on, and so must the HGO Studio!”
Our music staff members have opened their own homes as makeshift coaching locations. Venues across the city were more than welcoming as we sought alternative performance locations. We are touched by the generosity of a wonderful corporate supporter who reached out to provide space for events, administration, and parking.

The arts bring people together, inspire us to greatness, and comfort us in our darkest hours. Now more than ever, this community needs world-class opera: “What great art does best is refill your soul, and I think there’s a great need for that in this city,” says Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers.

The support and concern expressed by the extended HGO family has touched us deeply. In the years to come, as we share stories about this storm, the thing we will remember most is how Houstonians have stood together.

HGO’s stunning 2017–18 season continues as planned, only in a new space in the George R. Brown Convention Center—the aptly named HGO Resilience Theater. The show will go on, even though the season opens on another stage. When the curtain rose on the first performance of La traviata on October 20, it was more than one of the most beautiful and beloved operas of all time: it was the healing force we desperately need. We are thrilled we are able to keep sharing our art with you.

The Wortham Theater surrounded by the waters of Buffalo Bayou; “life support” at the loading dock, one of the main entry points for the water.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

HGO is facing the greatest financial challenge in its history. At this time we estimate that the company’s direct and indirect losses due to Hurricane Harvey over the next three years are approximately $12-15 million. No company can face these losses and survive—not without help. Please help ensure that HGO remains on a strong financial footing, so that it can be here in the future.

SEVERAL EASY WAYS TO DONATE:

Please visit hgo.org/Harvey.

Mail your gift payable to HGO to:
Houston Grand Opera
510 Preston Street
Houston, Texas 77002

Call or email Jennifer Wijangco, Director of Development at 713-546-0200 or jwijangco@hgo.org

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SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

HGO united to serve its devastated community in the aftermath of Harvey.

On September 8, more than 50 HGO staffers, Studio artists, and family members rolled up their sleeves and volunteered together at the Houston Food Bank. After two weeks of not seeing each other while waiting out the storm and working remotely from various locations, it was a relief to stand side by side doing some good for the community we all love. Together with other organizations, HGO helped to fill a record-breaking 39 pallets with food boxes (the equivalent of 28,000 meals).

The staff of HGOco reached out to community groups and evacuee shelters, offering comfort and entertainment in the form of Storybook Opera, an interactive musical program for children. HGOco’s singing storytellers brought to life two favorite tales, Opera Cat and Westward Ho, Carlotta!, with corresponding opera-themed crafts projects for some of Houston’s uprooted children. The cast of Opera to Go!, our popular touring group, made another trip to the Houston Food Bank, where they joined the “Backpack Buddies” assembly line to help prepare weekend meals for Houston children...children we hope to see in the audience one day!

We’re determined that, in good times and bad, young people never lose their access to life-changing art. HGO is proud to be a part of Houston—a community that knows how to lend a helping hand.

A FEW KIND WORDS

Here are a few kind words from some of the donors who reached out to us from all over the country and contributed to the HGO Harvey Fund. We couldn’t be more touched at the outpouring of love and support! Thank you!

When I think of Houston, I think of Houston Grand Opera. Your energy and artistry are appreciated across the country.

—Guy Pugh, Canton, MA

Our hearts and thoughts are with you all during this challenging time and we wish you the very best as you work to rebuild and restore.

—The Staff of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Saint Louis, MO

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4
LEADING THE WAY

Helen Wils and Leonard Goldstein set an example in philanthropy.

When HGO Trustee Helen Wils went on her first date with Leonard Goldstein, the man she would marry, they attended a Houston Grand Opera production of Bellini’s Norma. She said to herself, “A guy who likes opera cannot be all bad.”

Today, their love of world-class performing arts and financial support of HGO are a big part of the example that Helen and Leonard try to set for their grandchildren.

“They know that they will have funds from us,” says Helen, “and we expect them to use those funds wisely. Part of that means continuing to contribute to cultural organizations like HGO. We have been fortunate, and we believe in giving back to the city that has given us so much.”

Helen is a retired estate lawyer and a member of HGO’s Laureate Society—a special group of patrons who contribute to the opera through estate planning. A lifelong opera fan, Helen says, “Music speaks to you in ways that other things do not in terms of expressing emotion, providing relief from stress, and enjoyment.”

Helen and Leonard travel the world to hear great music, and Helen tells us, “HGO is second to none.”

We couldn’t agree more, and we are so honored to have Helen and Leonard as members of the HGO family.

To learn more about how you can join Helen and Leonard in the Laureate Society by making a planned gift, please contact Richard Buffett at rbuffett@hgo.org or 713-546-0216.

As a stage artist, one hopes that one’s work will have a tangible impact on its audience. Sitting in the HGO Resilience Theater on the season’s opening night made me realize that lighting these operas for HGO was my way of doing something for Houston and its recovery. Hugh Miller said, “Problems are only opportunities with thorns on them.” There may have been a few more thorns than we expected at George R. Brown, but the opportunity to connect, work together, and make relevant work for the city of Houston was worth all of them.

—Marcus Doshi, lighting designer for La traviata and Julius Caesar, Evanston, IL

I lived in Houston for one year and the opera company changed my assumptions of Houston. Houston is a BIG, DIVERSE, ART LOVING TOWN. Houston Grand Opera is essential for the sustainability of Houston.
—Teresa Spezio, Pomona, CA

It has been both heartbreaking to follow the saga of Hurricane Harvey, a storm of truly epic proportions... and heartwarming to learn of the extent to which Americans from other parts of the country have demonstrated their compassion, selflessness, and humanity in extending themselves and their knowledge, skills, aptitudes, and financial resources to be of service.

—Stanley Milstein, Olney, MD

My heart goes out to you and the rest of Houston. What you all do matters! Pulling for a strong season and the beauty you offer to Houston amid the wreckage.
—Hannah Wong, Austin, TX

It is my pleasure to help in a small way. After Tristan and Isolde, I met Patrick Summers and was very impressed with his knowledge and commitment to the art form. As a patron of the San Francisco Opera, I have made friends with several wonderful singers who went through the HGO Studio. Wishing you the best of luck in the recovery process.
—Helen Berggruen, San Francisco, CA
HGO PATRONS TOUR
NORTHERN ITALY

A group of 30 HGO Patrons made the pilgrimage to northern Italy this summer to see opera at La Scala in Milan and the Arena in Verona. The trip featured a backstage tour of La Scala; a cocktail party in Verdi’s Milan residence; a tour of Casa di Riposo, the residence for retired musicians and singers that Verdi founded in 1896; a visit to the Donizetti Museum in Bergamo; and a private tour of the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua. And of course, no Patron trip would be complete without several memorable dinners and nights at the opera!

Come Tour With Us!

GARSINGTON & GLYNDEBOURNE
July 15–22, 2018

Enjoy the best of English countryside opera festivals at Garsington Opera and Glyndebourne, synonymous with beautiful gardens and great opera.

Garsington Opera
• The Skating Rink  World premiere opera by David Sawer, featuring Neal Davies, Sam Furness, Ben Edquist, and Susan Bickley
• The Magic Flute  Featuring Louise Alder, Benjamin Hulett, Jonathan McGovern, and Íride Martínez

Glyndebourne Festival
• Saul  Featuring Markus Brück and Iestyn Davies
• Pelléas et Mélisande  Featuring Christina Gansch, John Chest, Christopher Purves, and Brindley Sherratt

SANTA FE  |  August 14–19, 2018

A perennial favorite of HGO Patrons, this trip features spectacular open-air opera and dinners hosted by fellow HGO Patrons in their beautiful homes. The 2018 trip will coincide with the Santa Fe Indian Market.

Operas Include:
• Candide  Featuring Brenda Rae, Alek Shrader, and Kevin Burdette
• Dr. Atomic  Featuring Ryan McKinny and Julia Bullock
• Madame Butterfly  Featuring Ana María Martínez and Joshua Guerrero

For more information:
HGO.org/travel
Contact Scott Ipsen 713-546-0242  |  sipsen@hgo.org
HGO spreads its influence and recovers some of the costs of creating new productions by renting them to other companies worldwide. You can see by the map that the name of Houston Grand Opera is known by operagoers across our nation and in many parts of the world.